

52 *THE CASTAWAYS OF THE FLAG*

horizon line, which, from observers on
the level
of the sea, must still be ten or
twelve miles
away.

The oars had been got out* Fritz
and James
were rowing with all the strength they
could exert.
But in their state of exhaustion they
could not lift
the heavily loaded boat, and it would
take them the
entire day to cover the distance which
lay between
them and the shore.

God grant that the wind might not
thwart all
their efforts! On the whole it would be
better if the
calm endured till evening. Should the
breeze blow *
from the north, the boat would be
carried far back
from these waters.

By midday it was questionable whether
more than
a couple of miles had been done since
morning.
The boatswain suspected that a current
was setting
in the opposite direction.

About two o'clock in the afternoon
John Block,
who was standing up, exclaimed :—

" A breeze is coming; I can feel it!
The jib by
itself will do more than the oars."

The boatswain was not mistaken. A few
minutes
later little flaws began to paint green
the surface of
the water in the south-west, and a

creamy ripple
spread right to the sides of the boat.
" That shows you are right, Block,"
said Fritz,
** But still, the breeze is so faint that we
must not
stop rowing."

*